GOSSIP OF THE DRAMA FROM MANY POINTS OF VIEW

Good Plays and Bad

A Group Now on View at Paris Which Touches Realism, Dramatic Miniature Painting, and Themes Long Since Worn Out.

If Moliere could revisit the glimpses of the Comedie Francaise, would he be shocked or not at Octave Mirbeau's "Les Affaires Sont les Affaires?" The play is startlingly realistic for a house which has so faithfully conserved the classic traditions of the French stage.

A few seasons ago Mirbeau's "Les Mauvais Bergers" created a mild sensation because of the doctrines it set forth. Tolstoyism, Ibsenism, and several other latter-day "isms" ran rampant through the five acts. He has also written three pieces of one act each, two of them comedies, "L'Epidemie," "Vieux Menages," "Le Portefeuille." It is not necessary now to allude to this writer's short stories. Some of them, powerful as they are, have an odor which is said to permeate all China. "Le Journal d'une Femme de Chambre" has had a vogue, being in the 100,000th in the original edition. It has, I am sorry to say, been translated. "Le Jardin des Supplices" betrays an extraordinary imagination, but a maleficent one. Mirbeau is read to better advantage in "Sebastian Roch" and in his plays.

"Les Affaires Sont les Affaires" ("Business Is Business") is in the repertory of the Francaise for good. M. Clarette has shown considerable elasticity in matters of judgment before this, yet I doubt if he ever risked such a piece on the venerable boards of this official theater. It is not alone its modern note, but the smashing of idols—clerical, aristocratic, socialistic and commercial—wherein this comedy offends. Seldom a performance without hissing, cheering, with heated disputes in the lobbies. The night I witnessed the play, the third act set rival political parties hissing each other. After all our beloved French cousins take the art of the theater seriously. It is more than a digestive diversion, and little less than a religion.

The Money God on the Stage.

Mirbeau is not the first dramatist to put a swindling man of affairs before the footlights. Le Sage's "Turcaret" is a mere name today for most students of the drama, yet it was considered a dangerously true portrait a century ago. And Balzac's "Mercadet," that play upon which he built so many hopes, gave his contemporaries a terrible picture of a financier. But in Balzac's novels may be found a regular gallery of bankers and spider-like usurers. The figure of Nucingen is an imperishable one. Octave Feuillet's "Montjoye" is a reduced reproduction of a Balzac character brought down to the times of the second empire, while Zola, in "L'Argent," expanded his epical gifts of description in imagining a scoundrel speculator. Nor must Daudet's "Nabob" be forgotten.

Mirbeau, naturally, is nearer to us—for the present—than his predecessors. He has gone to the bourse, as did Zola, and studied his men on the spot. Some persons here hint that Isidore Lechat is a full-length drawing of the late Lebaudy, father of Max Lebaudy, known on the Boulevard as "Le Petit Sucrier." But others insist that the name Isidore has its racial significance, that Lechat might have been Katzenstein before the family moved to Alsace. No matter. Isidore Lechat is today the most vital figure on the stage, and as played by De Feraudy is superb.

And he might have stepped out of a Balzac book, for he is the very incarnation of volitional energy. Twice arrested for swindling, twice an inmate of prisons, this Napoleon of finance manages to escape the law by technicalities—which means in France, as it does everywhere, that justice may be hoodwinked.

Dynamo, Blackguard, and Napoleon.

Lechat has repudiated his debts twice; he is owner of a newspaper, behind the types of which he manages to manipulate the stock market, to float all sorts and conditions of shaky companies, to swindle at his glorious leisure. Not that he is a man of leisure. No dramatic character was ever so active as is Isidore Lechat. A dynamic energy, exhaustless, terrifically noisy, he stirs all about him by his torrential flow of conversation, his ceaseless unrest. He has that mock air of hail-fellow well met which deceives the average man and woman; and, a niggard in private life, he throws money away in public to the blaring of brass bands and proletarian shoutings.

Lechat is never lovable, though he interests. A bigger blackguard never trod shoe leather. It is his supreme scamphood which piques and startles the spectator who follows his fortunes with almost the regard bestowed upon a great tragic figure. For this Mirbeau's realistic art is the cause.

Half a century ago, when the well-made play was the end-all of French dramatists, such a slice of real life as "Business Is Business" would have been publicly and critically hooted. It is pitchforked on the stage—this would be the cry. In reality as a piece of dramatic construction this comedy is not admirable. It runs to lengths in the matter of speeches; it has no beginning, no end. It might be called "A Day in the Life of a Swindler," just as Mirbeau called a nasty book of his "Twenty-one Days of a Neurasthenic."

Bold Character Drawing.

I have not explained the breadth and depth of the financier's politics. He is a Socialist with leanings toward conservatism—that is, he hunts with the hounds and runs with the hares. His magnificent chateau adjoins the now impoverished estate of Porcellet. The marquis already owes him 130,000 francs. He has a son. Lechat has a daughter. To see aristocracy and finance united is his dream.

His own son, the petted one of his gaudy household, is a friend of dukes, has a $10,000 automobile, and is a degenerate of the most approved and modish kind.

The daughter, Germaine Lechat, is a study only second in interest to her father. After reading the play and seeing it twice acted, I think that with a stronger, or rather a more suitable, actress than Mlle. Lara, the role would gain enormously.

This young lady has studied her scales assiduously after the precise methods of the Francaise. She has distinction, dignity and plenty of temperament, but these attributes are canalized in the classic style and we miss the freedom, the touch of the vulgar necessary for the exact delineation of Germaine Lechat. She is her father's daughter in her imperious will and stubbornness in the face of disaster, and she has something of her mother's bourgeois love of comfort and hatred of display. A course of socialistic reading and a study of woman's rights have set her against her father. When these two wills collide there is war.

Of the mother, there is little to be said, except that the skilled and sympathetic investiture of the part by Madame Blanche Pierson lends it a reasonableness and vitality. The poor woman, her brain fuddled by the constant boiling of the pot in which she is immersed, watches her husband in a scared, furtive way. She knows that he is a thief, but feebly defends him when her daughter, outraged by his selfishness and heartlessness, attacks him. "Your father," she pleads, "would be the best of men were it not for business, but as soon as he begins business, I admit his conscience takes leave of him." A fair though not sweeping epitaph for many a man's headstone.

Well Written and Well Acted.

De Ferraudy is the Lechat. His impersonation is the delight of Paris and rightfully so. This actor shares with Gemier of the Odeon the histrionic honors of the town. His rapidity of speech, clearness of enunciation, lithe, vigorous, nervous movements and his perfect self-control fit him for the role.

Octave Mirbeau is lucky in possessing such an able collaborator. Lelior excels in the delineation of musty aristocrats. His old Marquis is an elaborate portrait; not a detail is missing. He held his own in the scene a faire. Of particular interest were the two speculators, impersonated by Laugier and Garry. The former is, as usual, burly; the latter is fine as a scimiter. He really suggested glacial gulfs of villainy. Mirbeau knows Balzac thoroughly.

The lover is Raphael Duflos, comparatively a new acquisition of the Francais. He leaves one cold. Is it not a commentary on this piece that the interesting people in it are scoundrels and selfish; the good are dull or mediocre?

Mirbeau's literary ability is manifest in the brilliant, polished, restrained style. He makes rapier thrusts at church, state and society, and being a radical at all points he does not care whom he wounds.

A Dramatic Miniature.

The announcement that the Renaissance would close its doors for the summer sent many to that house, for Anatole France's engaging little episode, "Crainquebille," was nightly played as an afterpiece to "La Princesse Georges," a revival of an antique Dumasfilial comedy. I wished to judge if the praise given with generous hands to the France tableaux was just, and I also desired to see again that impossibly charming young actress Marthe Brandes in her new surroundings, for she is a recent seceder from the Comedie Francaise household.

No need of introducing that spirituelle writer Anatole Thibault, known as Anatole France. America has long appreciated his "Thais," his many-colored short stories, his delicate irony. "Crainquebille" is not a play, but a transcript from low life by a man of singularly sensitive temperament. Alphonse Daudet was fond of the phrase "Russian pity" in writing about Tolstoy or Dostoievsky. M. France has this "pity" in abundance, only it evokes the manes of Charles Dickens rather than the Muscovitish masters of fiction.

Crainquebille is one of those street venders peculiar to Paris, a wretched-looking old fellow with grizzled mustache and weather-beaten face, who pushes his old cart slowly before him through steep and narrow streets—Montmartre is often well named. Cabbage, carrots, peas, potatoes, onions, he sells, and is beloved in the Quarter for his kindly ways. As if to show the unexpected tricks fate can play, the old man, while waiting for 14 cents owed by a woman to whom he had sold some vegetables, gets into an altercation with a policeman, interferes with traffic, is arrested, unjustly accused, and imprisoned. When he returns to his beloved Montmartre after fifteen days' absence he finds things changed. No one will have anything to do with him, he is insulted, jeered at, and, finally, starving, is forced to take refuge with a street Arab in an old building.

To achieve his portrait the dramatist resorts to miniature painting. With small, sly strokes he shows Crainquebille's good heart, Crainquebille's honesty. Crainquebille's faith in the goodness of men, Crainquebille's disillusionment, his utter despair and eventful submission to fate's decree. All this is simply accomplished. Lucien Guitry is a gifted illusionist. He suggests more with a shoulder shrug than some actors do with a torrent of rhetoric. His Crainquebille is hoarse-throated, laconic, an old dog whose eyes are mere slits filled with the rheum of age, whose movements are creaky as an unoiled door hinge. But he is full of humor, as the court scene shows. Humor, sentiment—never sentimentality—are the traits of this little transcript from life. All the players were capital, the effect produced being one of life-like candor, and Dickens was

BESSIE TANNEHILL—Giffen Company.

suggestive in every scene, particularly in the humors of the French tribunal methods.

"La Princesse Georges."

In comparison with this invertebrate, yet none the less real, quivering life, "La Princesse Georges" seemed as old as Noah's ark. It must have been written before the flood, with its tiresome thesis that women must forgive marital peccadilloes. And that second act, with its mechanical weaving of events, its fashionable dames who gossip in the mode metaphysical! The denouement is lugged in by the hair, and positively the piece was unendurable as a play after the first—if it had not been for Marthe Brandes.

You wonder why M. Jules Claretie ever allowed this delicious creature to leave the protecting pigeon coop of the old theater.

Brandes, in addition to being adorably lovely, has temperamental gifts of a high order. Her face is full of feeling, and she projects upon it, as if it were a disk illumined from within, all the tenderness, tragic terror, animal jealously, and genuine passion Dumas demanded when he wrote the role for Desclee. She was adequately supported by Guitry as the blockhead husband, and asinine character; Berthe Marie Nolzeaux, Nerny, and the invaluable Marie Samary.—James Huneker, in the New York Sun.

Coming Attractions.

The success of musical comedy by the Giffen company at the Lafayette Square Opera House has been such as to induce the management of the organization to continue indefinitely.

Even though the thermometer mounts to high altitudes the engagement will be continued. Manager La Motte has installed electric fans, and with the open spaces on either side of the theater the Lafayette would seem to be particularly well prepared to resist the warm spell.

"The Lady Slavey," which will be the bill this week, is in two acts, the work of George Dance.

In 1896 at the Lafayette the piece had its premier American presentation, and the verdict of the Washington public presaged the gratifying prosperity which "The Lady Slavey" subsequently enjoyed. It experienced a memorable New York run, and later found popularity on the road.

It is a lively concoction of wit and melody, with now and then a suggestion of several other British musical pieces, such as "The Gaiety Girl," "The Artist's Model," and others. In its make-up "The Lady Slavey" consists largely of a panorama of incidents, quite independent of one another, which permits of the introduction of numerous specialties. The music of the piece is light and tuneful, and at times rises to highly artistic heights. The effects are novel and picturesque, and it is said that Stage Director W. H. Fitzgerald who is responsible for the several smooth performances of the Giffen company, has prepared a number of new and artistic effects for the coming week.

In addition to the many solos and ensemble numbers incident to the piece, new specialties will be introduced by the principal members of the company. Miss Deyo, who has attained a wide and convincing popularity since her opening at the Lafayette, will be heard in a pretty Japanese number, assisted by the large chorus. An original dance has been arranged by Lewis Hooper for the song. Joseph Phillips, the baritone of the organization, will present a number particularly suited to his voice, and John H Young, who has already given several clever characterizations, will have a new singing specialty.

Sylvester James, who successfully played the waiter in "The French Maid," the past week, will introduce a new topical song.

The cast for "The Lady Slavey" will be made up, with Miss Deyo as the Lady Slavey, a role originated by Virginia Earle here. John H. Young will be the Roberts, a part in which Charles Danby, an English actor who originated the role in this country and abroad, made a notable hit, and to Sylvester James will be intrusted the role of William Sykes, a characterization in which the funereal drawl of Dan Daly found ample scope in the original production. Charles Giblyn will be the Ikey Dinklebinkle; William H. Conley, the grocerman; Arthur Barry, the Major Tolliver; Lewis Hooper, the Lord Lavender, and Joseph Brooks, the Vincent Evelyn. Bessie Tannehill will be the Flo Honeydew. The famous ladies' quartet will be made up of Misses Victoria, Estee, Litchfield, and Lane.

The performance Monday evening will be for the benefit of Robert Fatts, a local boniface, whose friends have arranged for this as a testimonial of their confidence and esteem.

Memories of the Gaiety.

Proud History of London's Old and Popular Theater.

London's Gaiety Theater is about to end its career of thirty-five years.

"There is an end to all things, however," says the "Daily Telegraph," "and at length the fiat has gone forth fixing the date of the final performance to be given at the famous playhouse. The evening of Saturday, July 4, has been selected for the event in question, and, as may easily be imagined, many are the playgoers who have already advanced claims to be present on so momentous an occasion.

"It will also be understood that Mr. George Edwardes is not the man to allow that occasion to pass without some special mark of recognition. In point of fact, the matter is one to which he is at present giving very particular attention.

"So far he has merely determined that the program shall consist of 'The Toreador' and 'The Linkman.' But, as every one knows, both pieces are composed of a singularly elastic texture and can thus be lengthened or shortened with the greatest possible ease. Into them, therefore, Mr. Edwardes proposes introducing certain novel features calculated to give the bill a peculiar and highly attractive interest. Another feature will be the presentation of a souvenir, the nature of which we are not yet at liberty to disclose, but that it will be of a valuable and handsome character we are in a position to state empatically."

"Having regard to all the circumstances, there need be no surprise that prices of admission, save in the case of pit and gallery, which remain unchanged, are to be somewhat higher than usual. Thus, twenty guineas will be charged for boxes, five for stalls, three for dress, and one for upper circle. That the fact will in any way tend to stem the rush for places, applications for which even now number over one thousand, is scarcely likely."

"The approaching close of the Gaiety has drawn forth many reminiscences, and probably never has a theater been more genuinely 'loved' by its habitues," says the "Pall Mall Gazette."

"How pleasant it was of a winter's night in the late seventies and early eighties, when rain or sleet would be sweeping the chilly Strand, to see the crystal illumination which, in the Terry-Farren days, shone above the principal entrance, with the magic words 'Gaiety Theater' glittering brightly! In what other theater was the toil-worn man so absolutely assured of mirth and music and beauty? The names of the bright and pretty women and of the clever men who kept the 'Sacred Lamp' alight, are, even at this date, so familiar as to be almost banal and need not be rementioned here. But—'there are others.'

"On the stage of the theater now passing away Ada Reban first captivated London with her unsurpassable Katharina. The late Rose Leclercq gave her beautiful impersonation of 'That Lass o' Lowrie's'; Mlle. Van Zandt appeared first to Londoners in 'Lakme'; Croizette and Got and Sarah Bernhardt first appeared in England with the Comedie Francaise; Mrs. Keeley, stricken in years, reappeared at Maddison Morton's benefit and in 'Betsy Baker' showed the humor that had been delighting London forty years ago, and W. S. Gilbert (on the same afternoon) 'walked on' and played a thinking part. These are but few comparatively latter-day Gaiety memories that stand out from hundreds. Sentiment has always played too big a part in writing about the stage; but not the most hardened cynic need deny the tribute of a sigh to the famous playhouse so soon to close its doors."

"The Wagner Bubble Burst."

An Annual Announcement Which Has Now Appeared for 1903.

E. I. Prime-Stevenson has made a wonderful discovery, which he exploits in the "Musical Courier." It is that the musical interest is "swerving from Wagner."

The only objection to this discovery is that it was made as long ago as 1847, and has been made since every year, every month, nay, every week.

In 1856 Davidson, the critic of the "London Times," wrote: "Robert Schumann has had his innings, and been bowled out—like Richard Wagner. 'Paradise and the Peri' has gone to the tomb of the 'Lohengrins.'"

In 1875 Tetis wrote that "since 1861 there has been a noticeable decline of the Wagner movement in Germany." Everybody remembers Mr. Rowbotham's famous article, "The Wagner Bubble Burst," written about fifteen years ago.

The "mere facts" are that over 1,300 performances of Wagner's works were given in German opera houses last year; that in Paris, Wagner has gone ahead even of Gounod; that in London they are having no fewer than three Nibelung cycles this season; that the interest in New York centers on the question whether "Parsifal" will be given next year.

Mr. Stevenson doubtless knows these facts; but he treats them with contempt. He has no use for them; but he lived in America long enough to have at least acquired some sense of humor. His great idol is Spontini, whose works were dead fifty years ago. When he failed in his efforts to resurrect these, he retired into voluntarily exile in the wilds of Hungary.—New York Evening Post.

Marlowe-Sothern Program.

Viewed as a Promise of Better Things for Our Stage.

The announcement from London that Julia Marlowe and E. H. Sothern are to act together in Shakespearean pieces for a term of years is one of the most interesting that has been made recently. The fact that they are to appear under the management of Charles Frohman is encouraging, because it justifies the hope that our managerial magnates may be contemplating a change of policy, involving a higher order of entertainment.

From this point of view the spurt of Shakespearean activity which is to mark the beginning of next season, although it is confined to one or two plays, may have more significance than is apparent on the surface. There is not much to be gained, in an artistic sense, from occasional performances, with scratch casts, of "As You Like It" or "Twelfth Night," for the sake of some aspiring Rosalind or Viola, but a series of Shakespearean revivals lasting for several years could scarcely fail to have a beneficial effect, not only by restoring prestige to the theater, but by creating a demand for actors capable of something better than the reproduction of social insipidities.

The partnership of Miss Marlowe and Mr. Sothern is not to begin until the autumn of 1904, when they are to enter upon a course of Shakespearean representations, including "Romeo and Juliet," "Much Ado About Nothing," "As You Like It," "The Taming of the Shrew," "The Merchant of Venice," "A Winter's Tale," and "Hamlet."

Herein is promise of much that will excite pleasurable anticipation. That Miss Marlowe should find this opportunity of returning to those characters in which she won the most substantial part of her reputation is cause for sincere congratulation, and, with ripened powers, she may be expected to eclipse her earlier triumphs. That Mr. Sothern, after his popular and highly creditable success in "Hamlet," should aspire to other honors in the poetic drama was inevitable, and there will be a general curiosity to witness his Romeo, Benedick, Shylock, and Orlando.

Everybody having the future of the theater at heart will wish, for both these favorite players, the very best of good fortune and the choicest laurels of artistic achievement.—New York Evening Post.

The Cake Walk in Paris.

A Competition Which Would Open the Eyes of Most Americans.

The "Daily Telegraph's" Paris correspondent sends the following account of a competitive cakewalk show in the French capital:

"Twelve good Parisians and true, toward 1 o'clock this morning, at the Nouveau Cirque, proclaimed Mlles. Jeanne and Lina Peres champions of the cake walk. The jury included the editors of half a dozen of the liveliest, and consequently the most read, papers in Paris. The remainder of the judges were well-known boulevardiers. Pretty well 'All Paris' was present at the contest for the championship. The ladies were in their most exquisite toilets and most blazing diamonds, and the men in evening dress, which your ticket informed you was 'de rigueur.'

"In short, the event was a Parisian sensation. A more peculiarly Parisian function could not, indeed, be imagined.

"About eighteen couples, some picturesquely dressed, but most of them in hideous disguises, which were not even amusingly grotesque, went through the contortions of the 'nigger' so-called dance. A selected board of men-about-town solemnly and conscientiously judged the mad performance, and Le Tout Paris looked on with delight and eager interest. You could not find so strange a sight in any other city in the world.

"The band having struck up with frightful energy the popular Parisian tune of the day, called 'Viens Poupoule'—which happens to be a German air, the burden of which, as sung in Berlin, begins 'Komm' Caterina'—a procession of pastry cooks entered the arena, followed by two 'nigger' infants carrying the cake, and by the competitors walking or prancing, two by two. They were authentic 'niggers' in frock coat suits all of black, or all of scarlet, a professedly English soldier, with the strangest red coat and the funniest leggins imaginable, a podgy man in khaki, two small Russian dancers, the ladies being generally dressed merely in becoming short skirts and low bodices, while their partners had gone in for the grotesque style.

"Silence was ordered. The president of the jury rose and called upon the first couple. Eighteen times in succession the band played the same cake walk tune, and each succeeding couple went through the same contortions—side, front and back leaps, shuffling and stumbling jigs, and knee-to-chin prancing, with a few variations. Naturally the real 'niggers' were the only amusing performers, because they took themselves seriously, and put such delicious dignity into their fantastic marches and counter-marches.

"When the last couple had shown off, an usher announced that the gentlemen of the jury would retire to consider their verdict. After an entr'acte, the president, looking harassed, said that the jury disagreed.

"'Have it all over again,' shouted the house gleefully.

"However, only three couples, Mlles. Peres, both in sky blue, one of the ladies being dressed as a sailor boy, a real and a sham pair of negroes, were requested to give additional performances.

"Eventually, the jury awarding the championship to the two girls in blue, a splendid row ensued, all the men about town and the ladies with them in boxes and stalls booing and hissing because, with some reason, they considered that the real and the sham 'nigger' couples, who only took second award jointly should have carried off the first. But the twelve good and true boulevardiers never flinched, having discharged their solemn duties according to their conscience, and le tout Paris soon gave up demonstrating to go off to supper."

"God Made the Orchestra."

Sir George Grove Thought the Devil Added the Voices.

Sir George Grove, editor of the great "Dictionary of Music and Musicians," cared much more for instrumental than for vocal music. He used to say that "God made the orchestra, and the devil added the voices," and though he was strongly impressed by the beauty of Schubert's songs, he never really appreciated any music which was not purely orchestral and "absolute" in form.

His likes and dislikes in schools of composition were emphatic. He stood for the "great German succession"—Beethoven, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Schumann, and Brahms. Liszt and Wagner he did not like; the music-drama did not appeal to him. He defended Handel from disparagement.

He liked melody and grace in music, beauty, and pleasantness, an inviting style which he compared to a pleasant address. Sound and fury, he complained, had taken the place in music of that caressing treatment of beautiful phrases and subjects of which Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert were so fond. "Bayreuth makes me angry and fierce," he wrote. At the same time, he was not really a musical scholar.

A writer in the "London Musical Herald" intimates that the first edition of his work on Beethoven's symphonies was so full of errors that it had to be destroyed. On the vexed question of music and morals he would say, "If culture is outside of morals, then music may be a cultivator, but I can't see that it has anything to do with morals." On another point he writes in 1884, "A musical nation we may be, in one sense, since we pay any amount of German musicians to play and sing their music to us, but a musical nation in the sense that Germany and Italy are musical nations, that I am sure we are not."

Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise

An Author Who Delves Deep Into Theology for His Material.

Dante, Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise figure in a drama produced recently in the Queen's Theater, Manchester.

"The author, A. C. Calmour," says a London reviewer, "wrote the play some ten or twelve years ago, and dedicated it to Mr. Gladstone.

"The first act, the scene being a street in Florence, shows Dante, then in his twenty-fifth year, setting out to take the command of troops to put down an insurrection in a distant part of Tuscany.

"Hearing a cry of distress from a veiled female, he rushes forward, and on raising her veil discovers Beatrice, daughter of Folo Portinari, with whom he had exchanged love passages against the wishes of her father. At the moment of rescue she was being conveyed to a place where she would be compelled to marry Simon Bardi, a member of the Ghibelline party, to whom Dante was opposed. Beatrice gives her lover a ring which had belonged to her mother, vowing that she will be the first to welcome his return to Florence and crown him with a laurel wreath. Portinari, urged by Corso Donati, Dante's enemy, ostensibly professes his willingness to permit the hero to woo his daughter should he return victorious from the war, but Donati secretly resolves upon his assassination. For this purpose he employs a jester and ballad singer, called Scampolino.

"At the opening of the second act Dante is asleep in the hut of a peasant, and when Scampolino enters with a dagger the crime is frustrated by a young attendant. The would-be assassin had previously informed Corso Donati that he had actually killed his intended victim, and Beatrice, yielding under this belief to her father's wishes, marries Bardi. As the bridal procession is about to leave the church Dante, having put an end to the insurrection, enters. An explanation follows, and the hero, having admonished Beatrice of her duty to her husband, goes into voluntary exile. On again returning to Florence, Dante is elected chief magistrate. The principal scene in the third act deals with the trial and sentence, which included banishment and confiscation of their estates, of Portinari and other members of the opposite party. Beatrice makes an impassioned appeal to Dante to reduce her father's sentence to a fine, but without avail. In the last act, Charles of Valois deposes Dante, who is banished; but before he leaves the city he witnesses the death of Beatrice, who is poisoned by Donati.

"Three tableaus of Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise formed the final scenes of the drama last night. Dante and Beatrice were admirably played by Cooper Cliffe and Miss Ellen O'Malley. The characters of Corso Donati, Folco Portinari, Guido Cavalvanti, a friend of Dante, and Pecora, a leader of the mob, were cleverly acted by Frank Wolfe, James Skea, Ivan Simpson, and William Calvert. The staging was excellent.

Bandsmen Paid Sixty Cents.

Low Daily Earnings of Musicians for Britannia's Warships.

The bandsmen in the British navy are almost all foreigners, who can play stringed as well as wind instruments. Their pay is wretched. "London Truth" thus sums up the state of affairs, on information derived from an officer on active service:

"The band in a battleship, it seems, officially consists of twelve, and in a flagship of fourteen, members, besides the bandmaster, so that it is perfectly obvious that even if all have their sea legs, the performance cannot be any but a modest one.

"These men are paid at the rate of 1s 4d, and the bandmaster at 2s 5d a day, with rations. The admiralty also generously contributes £17 a year in the case of battleships, and £20 in the case of a flagship—a dole which is just sufficient to pay for band parts and repairs. The actual cost of the band instruments, stands, etc., amounts to between £80 and £100; and this sum, together with any extra pay which the men may receive, comes from the pockets of the captain and wardroom officers, who thus are in much the same delightful predicament as officers in the army.

"My correspondent thinks that £9 to £10 a month is a fair average, and that the cost of the band to the officers for a commission of three and a half years is about £550, out of which the admiralty dole is £59 10s.

"The whole thing is, of course, an absurdity. The government contribution to any army band at present, £80, is shortly to be raised to £160 a year. Even this is grossly insufficient for the purpose, and why the navy should be starved with a £17 band is not at all clear. In each case the officers, for some reason which no mortal man whose brain is not dulled by departmental routine can divine, are expected to pay the difference."

A Gentle Rap at Mr. Tree.

His Success in "The Man Who Was" Explained Back-handed.

The ignominious collapse of Mr. Lowther's play, "The Gordian Knot," at His Majesty's Theater, seems to have been utterly unexpected by Mr. Tree, and has compelled him to fall back upon old attractions. When "Trilby" has run its course he meditates a revival of "Beau Nash," with "The Man Who Was" as a follower or a curtain raiser.

Mr. Tree appears to have made a hit as the miserable fugitive of Mr. Kipling's famous story, but the dramatization of the tale, judging from such brief descriptions as have reached here, must be singularly inept. As originally told it is intensely dramatic and sufficiently probable, but the adapter, apparently, has sought to fortify it by all sorts of miraculous coincidence.

He introduces, at a mess table, the sister whom Limmason is supposed to have befriended from the insults of a Russian officer, and identifies that officer with the bibulous and effusive Dirkovitch, who is supposed to be the author of the whole tragedy.

Moreover, Limmason is represented as reviving at the name of Inkermann, in which he is supposed to have acted a hero's part, as recognizing the Russian standard which he had captured, and as falling dead after a moment of ecstatic triumph. All this wears the aspect of the clumsiest kind of claptrap, but it is just the sort of stuff which appeals to the gallery, and also it may be added, to the dominating theatrical instinct of Mr. Tree.—New York Evening Post.

The Rewards of Ability.

Charles Manners Discloses Them Naively in a Lecture.

Charles Manners recently delivered an entertaining lecture in London, in which he said to the students of the Royal Academy of Music, among other things:

"I want to talk about what you are going to do after you leave here. You think you will be a Melba or a De Reszka at once; I had the same idea. I thought I would sit in an armchair in my drawing room smoking a cigar. My butler would come in and say, 'Mr. Carl Rosa is outside and would like to see you.' And I would say, 'I don't want any engagements at present. Tell him to come in about three weeks, as I am